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NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

RESEARCH BULLETIN

VOL. XX · No. 4 SEPTEMBER · 1942

Federal Aid for Education

A Review of Pertinent Facts

Published by the RESEARCH DIVISION of the
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
of the UNITED STATES
1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

RESEARCH BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Published five times each year in January, March, May, September, and November

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Entered as second-class matter February 10, 1923, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized February 10, 1923.

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FOREWORD

A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM of federal aid for public education has been a long-standing need of this nation. It will be needed even more in the years ahead. *Now* is the time to put such a program into effect.

I believe that sooner or later some states will find it almost impossible to keep their schools open without federal assistance. State and local tax systems will be hard pressed by the expanding federal tax program and by the forced decrease in sales of certain taxable commodities during the war. But to say that federal aid is inevitable is like saying that the United Nations will inevitably win the war. Such statements may be comforting but they do not help us to face squarely the need for driving thru to victory with the least possible waste of time, materials, and human resources. If we wait for tax difficulties within the states to force action by the federal government, millions of children will be subjected to drastic and unwarranted restrictions of educational opportunity. If we enact a suitable federal aid law now, we can prevent the collapse of schools in many areas and can gradually help raise them to more acceptable standards of efficiency.

Good schools are essential in wartime as in peace. Many students now in high schools will see military action before this struggle is over and many others will be employed in war industries. Whether or not children now in elementary schools are called upon to serve in these ways, they will have large responsibilities for postwar reconstruction. In all these activities able bodies and trained minds will be indispensable. Such requisites can be had in sufficient numbers only thru the maintenance and improvement of our public schools.

The reasons for excessive inequalities of educational opportunity among the states have been clearly revealed. The National Education Association thru its RESEARCH BULLETIN has played a major part in publicizing the basic facts. In 1926 the Association published "The Ability of the States To Support Education"; in 1936, "The Efforts of the States To Support Education"; and in 1937, "Federal Support for Education—the Issues and the Facts." These bulletins showed that existing differences among the states in adequacy of school support were due chiefly, not to differences in interest and effort, but to differences in economic ability and in the relative numbers of children to be educated. In 1938 came the report of President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Education, strongly recommending a broad program of federal aid for public schools.

In this new bulletin the NEA Research Division brings up to date the facts in the case for federal aid. The bulletin is issued as part of a concerted movement to secure the enactment of an appropriate federal aid law. Because of their recency and attractive mode of presentation, the facts given here will be interesting and useful to persons already familiar with the problem as well as to those not yet aware of the urgent need for federal aid to education.

WILLARD E. GIVENS, *Executive Secretary*
National Education Association

I. Introduction

America at war must put aside nonessentials in favor of all-out efforts to defeat the enemies of democracy. Does this mean that schools and other implements of education should be curtailed "for the duration"? On the contrary, it means that outworn or inferior school procedures and equipment must give way to better ones. Pupils of all ages need more adequate training for personal and social efficiency in accordance with democratic ideals. Older pupils need preparation for active participation in the war effort either as members of the armed services or as workers in war industries. Competence in mathematics, science, and mechanical activities, as well as physical fitness, is essential to success in modern warfare. Superior skill and understanding will be needed also in postwar reconstruction. Effective education for these tasks will be different from what many schools have been doing, and it will cost more than many school districts have been spending.

In making increased demands on all schools, the war emergency has intensified and re-emphasized the long-standing inadequacies of educational opportunity in certain parts of the nation. For many decades some states have had such limited tax resources that they could not maintain suitable schools for all children by any reasonable effort. The situation calls for a comprehensive program of financial aid from the federal government. This bulletin tells briefly what has been done in the field of federal aid for education and reviews the conditions which make further aid imperative.

History of Federal Aid for Education

Federal assistance to the states for educational purposes had its beginnings before our present Constitution was adopted. The Ordinance of 1785, providing for the official survey of public lands to the west of the original colonies, specified that lot No. 16 of each township should be reserved for the support of public schools. In 1787 and 1788 large tracts of land in what is now Ohio were sold by the Continental Congress with every sixteenth section reserved for schools.

Beginning with the admission of Ohio to statehood in 1802, this early policy was continued and extended by the new federal government on condition that the states exempt from taxation for five years all public lands sold by Congress. Except for Maine, Texas, and West Virginia, all states admitted to the Union after 1802 received land grants for schools. Most states west of the Mississippi River received two sections and some received four sections in each township. Most states upon admission also received smaller grants of land for college and university purposes. In 1862 the Morrill Act provided further grants, either of land or of land scrip, for the establishment of colleges of agriculture and mechanic arts in all states. The total amount of land given by the federal government specifically for common schools was about 121,130 square miles—an area larger than the state of Colorado and three times the size of Ohio.[1]

After several unsuccessful attempts to vote money grants to the states for education, Congress in 1887 appropriated $15,000 a year to each of the land-grant colleges for the operation of an agricultural experiment station. This amount was gradually increased so that in 1940-41 the federal appropriations averaged about $134,500 per institution. In 1890 the "Second Morrill Act" provided for further annual grants for the maintenance of the land-grant colleges. Beginning at $15,000 per year for each college, the amount had been increased by 1940-41 to an average of nearly $99,000, thus making a total of approximately $233,000 available, on the average, to each state and territory for its college of agriculture and mechanic arts. In 1914 the Smith-Lever Act gave money to the states, *on condition that they raise a similar amount,* for the diffusion of information on agriculture and home economics among persons not attending the colleges.

The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 created a system of federal and state matching of funds to carry on vocational education in public high schools under the supervision of a federal board for vocational education. Over a nine-year period the amount of federal money provided

[1] U. S. Department of the Interior, General Land Office. *School Lands.* Information Bulletin, 1939 Series No. 1. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1939. 11 p. See also: Cubberley, E. P. *State School Administration.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927. p. 15-47.

by this legislation was increased to more than $7,000,000 annually. In 1936 the George-Deen Act authorized an additional grant of $14,483,000, making available a total of over $21,000,000 of federal funds each year for vocational education under these two laws.

Since World War I there have also been large federal appropriations for the vocational re-education of war veterans and of persons disabled in industry. Within the past decade federal money has been given to operate schools closed by the economic depression, to provide nursery and adult education, to construct school buildings, to carry on the programs of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration, to train defense workers, and to extend and improve community facilities (including schools) in defense areas.

Earlier Proposals Sponsored by the National Education Association

About 1869 the National Teachers' Association—forerunner of the National Education Association—became actively interested in the proposal for a national university at Washington. In 1872 a bill was introduced in Congress to establish such a university but neither this bill nor any of its successors was passed.

In 1919 a committee of the Association recommended the establishment of a federal department of education with a secretary in the President's Cabinet and the appropriation of $100,000,000 each year to the states for the improvement of schools generally. Bills containing these provisions were introduced in 1919 (Smith-Towner), in 1921 (Sterling-Towner), and in 1923 (Sterling-Reed), but none was enacted. A few years later a similar bill without the provision for federal aid was advocated without success.

In 1936 the National Education Association sponsored the Harrison-Black-Fletcher Bill, which provided for an initial appropriation of $100,000,000 to the states for schools and an increase of $50,000,000 each year until $300,000,000 per year would have been reached. After hearings before the appropriate committees of Congress, the bill was approved by the Senate committee but got no further.

Advisory Committees on Education

In 1931 the National Advisory Committee on Education, appointed by President Hoover, issued a report presenting the facts, principles, and policies which it believed should determine federal relations to education in the states.[2] The report proposed no definite plan of federal aid but recommended that all future grants to the states be made for education in general rather than for specific phases of education.

In 1936 President Roosevelt appointed a Committee on Vocational Education to study the experience of the states under the existing program of federal aid for vocational education. In 1937 this Committee's name was changed to the "Advisory Committee on Education" and it was asked to consider all aspects of the relationship between the federal government and the state and local conduct of education. The Committee presented its report in 1938 with the following recommendations:[3]

1. General federal aid to the states for elementary and secondary education should begin with $40,000,000 per year and should be increased annually to $140,000,000 the sixth year. These grants should be allocated by formula according to the number of school-age children and the financial ability of the states. Each state should plan jointly with the U. S. Office of Education so as to lessen most effectively the inequalities of educational opportunity within the state. State and local agencies should continue to administer the schools, determine the content and processes of education, and decide how federal funds shall be used within the types of expenditure permitted. The U. S. Office of Education should audit the federal fund accounts of each state and should suspend payments to any state which fails to maintain an adequate administrative agency or fails to make required reports promptly.

2. Special federal funds should be established to assist the states in (a) improving the preparation of teachers, (b) constructing public school buildings, (c) administering state departments of education, (d) providing educational services for adults, (e) extending library service to rural areas, and (f) carrying on educational research, demonstrations, and planning.

Following the publication of the Advisory Committee's report, the National Education Association thru its Legislative Commission took the initiative in drafting a new federal aid bill based on the recommendations in that report. This bill, known as the Harrison-Thomas-Fletcher Bill, died on the calendar of

[2] Mann, Charles R., chairman. *Federal Relations to Education*. Report of the National Advisory Committee on Education. Washington, D. C.: the Committee, 1931. Part I, 140 p.; Part II, 448 p.

[3] Reeves, Floyd W., chairman. *Report of the Committee*. Advisory Committee on Education. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1938. 243 p.

the Senate and in the House Committee on Education. It was succeeded in 1939 by a new bill (S. 1305) which, altho based on the Advisory Committee's report, was designed to meet certain objections to the earlier measure. Like its predecessor, S. 1305 was reported favorably by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor but failed to become a law.

Current Needs for Federal Aid

By 1941 changing circumstances had made it desirable to reconsider the whole question of federal aid for education in the states. Accordingly, a new bill was drafted under NEA sponsorship to meet the following needs: (1) school facilities for children recently removed to areas of defense activities and industries; (2) better financial support of education for Negroes in states maintaining separate schools for Negroes; (3) equalization of opportunities for general elementary and secondary education among and within the states; (4) school facilities for children of migratory workers other than those in defense activities; and (5) suitable education for children of federal employees residing on government properties or reservations. The new measure, known as S. 1313, differed from its immediate predecessors in two important respects. It authorized a general appropriation of $300,000,000 each year without earmarking except for limitations on the amounts available for certain purposes, including school facilities needed solely to meet the exigencies of national defense. The bill also provided for a board of apportionment to determine the educational needs and financial abilities of the states and to make such allotments of federal funds as would equalize educational opportunities most effectively.

The Present Federal Aid Bill

S. 1313 was introduced by Senators Thomas of Utah and Harrison of Mississippi in April 1941. It was given a three-day hearing by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor but no further action was taken. Early in 1942 a modified draft of the bill was introduced under the sponsorship of Senator Thomas and Senator Hill (Alabama). This draft, known as S. 1313 (Amended), provides (1) that the proposed fund of $300,000,000 be distributed for the equalization of educational opportunities in elementary and secondary schools without reference to special phases of the problem; (2) that the money be allotted by the U. S. Commissioner of Education instead of by a special board; (3) that all but $5,000,000 of the fund be distributed among the states and territories according to a simple formula specified in the bill; and (4) that the money be used only for educational agencies and institutions under public control. S. 1313 (Amended) has the official support of the National Education Association and a number of other important national organizations.

Scope and Arrangement of Bulletin

The next five sections of this bulletin present the principal facts on which the case for general federal aid to education stands. These facts fall naturally under the following heads: (1) mobility of the population, (2) inequalities of educational opportunity, (3) relative educational responsibilities of the states, (4) relative economic ability of the states to support education, and (5) financial efforts of the states to support schools. Following these topics are data on the probable allocation of funds under the pending federal aid bill and some suggestions for helping to get the bill passed.

Most of the statistical information on which the bulletin is based was obtained from official reports of the U. S. Office of Education and the U. S. Bureau of the Census. Additional data were drawn from the investigations of authorities on population problems, income payments, taxation, and school finance. Generally it was possible to use final Office of Education figures for 1939-40 and final census enumeration figures for April 1, 1940. In this respect some of the data differ slightly from those presented in an earlier publication, *Education a National Problem*.

All but one of the charts are limited to data for the forty-eight states. It was impossible to obtain sufficiently recent figures for Hawaii on most items, or for Alaska and the District of Columbia on a few items, to warrant their inclusion as a regular procedure. These territories are represented, however, in Figure XVI on page 29, which shows the probable allocation of funds under the pending federal aid bill. Such other information as is available for these areas may be obtained by writing to the Research Division of the National Education Association.

II. Mobility of the Population

Why should the people of a comparatively wealthy state favor federal aid for education in the poorer states? The democratic argument is that all children, regardless of the place and circumstances of their birth, are entitled to suitable opportunities for education according to their capacities and needs. While this argument satisfies many people, it is not the only good reason for reducing educational inequalities among the states. Informed citizens realize that each year their own state receives thousands of persons who attended schools in other states and that these migrants inevitably bring with them the results of their schooling, good or poor. Migrants whose schooling was poor are usually liabilities rather than assets to their adopted states and communities.

Altho data are not available concerning the total number of persons moving into or out of each state during a given period, other types of information show that such migration has been substantial and widespread. In 1930, for example, nearly one-fourth of the nation's native-born inhabitants were living in states other than those in which they had been born. In ten states the number born elsewhere was at least 50 percent of the native American population and in thirty-six states it was more than 15 percent of the native population. Comparable figures for 1940, when available, are expected to show no general decrease in mobility.

Figure I identifies each state as belonging in one of five groups according to the percent of estimated net gain or loss in population thru migration from 1930 to 1940.[1] While twenty-one of the states experienced a net change of less than 3 percent, nine states gained or lost at least 10 percent. Of the sixteen states showing a net loss of 3 percent or more, twelve are in either the Southeast or the Northwest section of the nation. Of the eleven states gaining 3 percent or more, eight are in the Far West, Middle Atlantic, or New England area.[2] These facts reflect the known trends of population from the Great Plains to the Pacific Coast and from the Southeast to the Northeast.

Data on net migration conceal much of the actual movement of population among the states. For example, Arizona, with a net change of less than 3 percent, is estimated to have had a total in-migration between 1930 and 1939 equal to 31 percent of its 1930 population. Idaho, with a net gain of less than 10 percent, had an estimated total in-migration of 25 percent. It is regrettable that figures on total in-migration and total out-migration are available for only a few states. A recent estimate indicates, however, that during each year of the decade 1930-1940 at least four million persons moved from one state to another. This movement was by no means limited to farm families. In 1937—the year for which data are most reliable—there were roughly four million city-to-city migrants who crossed state lines, as compared to about one-half million farm migrants who moved from state to state.

Considerable information on urban migration is provided by the employment records of the federal Social Security Board. These records, which are concerned largely with employees in urban industries, indicate that in 1937 the twelve states ranking highest in relative out-migration (percent of the employees in all covered occupations who left the state) included four Northwestern states (Idaho, Kansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota), three Southwestern states (Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma), and two Southeastern states (Arkansas and Louisiana). In these states the relative out-migration ranged from about 12 percent to 23 percent of the persons employed in covered occupations. This does not mean that the states just mentioned led all others in the absolute number of urban industrial workers leaving the state. The nine states having the largest numbers of persons employed in covered occupations—New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Texas, and California—had 47 percent of all the out-migrants and 50 percent of all the in-migrants employed in such occupations.

[1] Since it was impossible to obtain data on mobility of population from the federal census of 1940 in time for inclusion in this bulletin, all such information reported in the following paragraphs was obtained from: U. S. House of Representatives, Committee to Investigate Migration of Destitute Citizens. *Interstate Migration.* Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1941. 741 p.

[2] In this bulletin the states are classified into the following seven regions (as indicated by the heavy lines in Figure I): New England, Middle Atlantic, Southeast, Middle, Southwest, Northwest, and Far West. Except for the division of the Northeast region into two parts—New England and Middle Atlantic—this classification is the same as that given in: Odum, Howard W. *Southern Regions of the United States.* Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1936. p. 5-11.

FIGURE 1

PERCENT OF ESTIMATED NET GAIN OR LOSS IN POPULATION THRU MIGRATION, 1930-1940
=Net loss of 10% or more
=Net loss of 3% to 9%
=Net loss or gain under 3%
=Net gain of 3% to 9%
=Net gain of 10% or more
Based on a chart in INTERSTATE MIGRATION, 77th Congress, 1st Session, House Report No. 369, page 322.
Research Division, National Education Association

III. Inequalities of Educational Opportunity

Many people are not aware of the wide differences in the scope and quality of public-school programs in the several states. While their full significance cannot be expressed in numbers, these differences are undoubtedly reflected to a significant degree by such factors as school expenditure per pupil, average salary paid to teachers, per-pupil value of school property, length of school term, and ratio of high-school enrolment to the number of persons of high-school age. This section presents data on each of these five factors.

Current expenditure per pupil—Altho equivalent educational opportunities need not cost the same in all the states, the present differences in per-pupil current expenditure (Figure II) are too great to be justified on the basis of sectional variations in prices and wages. In 1939-40 the lowest state, Mississippi, spent only $24 per pupil enrolled. This was less than one-fifth of the amount spent per pupil in the highest state, New York, and less than one-third of that spent in the nation as a whole. Ten states spent less than $50 (five of them less than $35) per pupil, while eight states spent $100 or more per pupil. The map in Figure III shows that all but one of the twelve lowest states are in the Southeast, and that none of the twelve highest are in either the Southeast or the Southwest.

Average salaries paid—Because salaries comprise a very large proportion of all current expenditures for schools, it is not surprising to find almost as wide a range in teachers' average yearly salaries as in total current expense per pupil. As shown in Figure IV, the state averages for all public elementary- and secondary-school teachers, principals, and supervisors in 1939-40 ranged from $559 in Mississippi to $2604 in New York. Six states paid less than $800, on the average, while eleven states paid more than $1600. Eight of the twelve lowest states are in the Southeast and three are in the Northwest. All these states are chiefly rural, whereas most of the twelve highest include large urban and industrial areas. To some extent the differences in salary between the two groups of states may be explained by variations in living costs, but chiefly they are due to differences in taxpaying ability.

If children in different parts of the nation are to have similar opportunities for learning, they must have teachers of similar qualifications. Such a condition can hardly be attained as long as salary levels differ as widely as they do today.

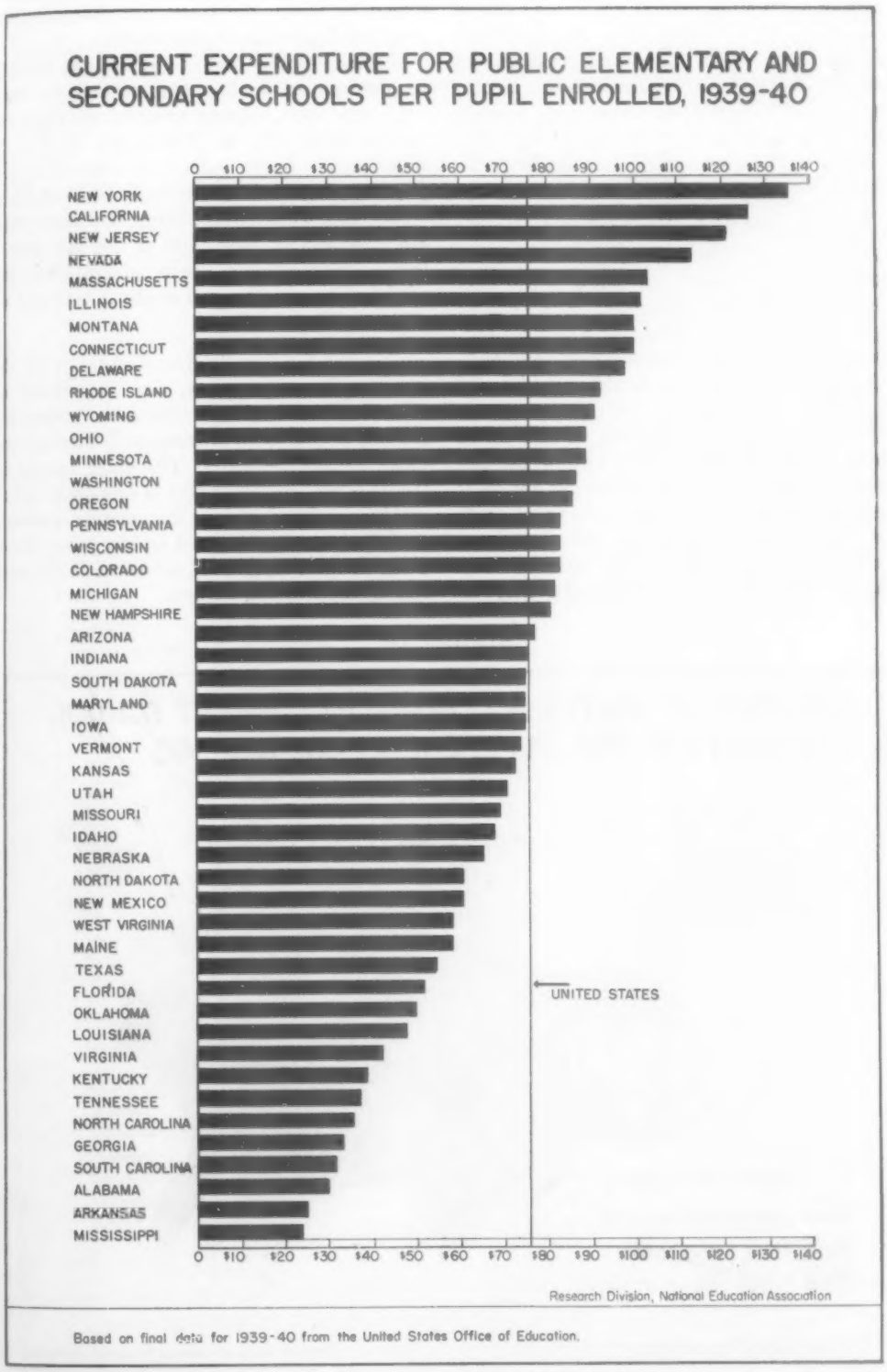
Per-pupil value of school property—Children cannot be cared for adequately in buildings that are obsolete, poorly constructed, or overcrowded. While the cost of a schoolhouse is not a highly accurate measure of its educational worth, wide differences in the financial value of school property undoubtedly indicate excessive inequalities among the states with respect to learning facilities. According to official reports, the value in 1939-40 of public elementary- and secondary-school property per pupil enrolled ranged from $80 in Tennessee to $526 in New York. In seven states such property was valued at more than $400 per pupil, while in four others it was appraised at less than $100 per pupil. Ten of the twelve lowest states are in the Southeast and the other two are in the Southwest; none of the twelve highest are in either of these areas. In the less fortunate states it will be necessary to spend large sums of money for better school buildings and equipment before reasonable equality of educational offerings can be attained.

Average length of school year—In 1939-40 the average school term in the nation as a whole was about 175 days, or 8¾ months. In the individual states the average term ranged from 146 days in Mississippi to 188 days in Maryland. While thirteen states operated their schools for at least 9 months, on the average, four states kept theirs open for less than 8 months and eleven operated for less than 8½ months.

In each state, of course, approximately one-half of the school children had terms that were shorter than the state average and, in general, rural-school terms were much shorter than those in urban areas. In the rural schools of Mississippi the typical term in 1937-38 was only 136 days while in the urban schools of the same state it was 177 days. For the whole nation the average length of rural-school terms was 166 days, as compared with an average term of 181 days in urban schools.

As in the case of the financial items mentioned above, most of the states ranking lowest

FIGURE II



Based on final data for 1939-40 from the United States Office of Education.

in length of school term are in the Southeast while those ranking highest are located chiefly in the Middle Atlantic, New England, and Middle states. With lower-paid teachers and inferior buildings and equipment, the Southeastern states cannot be expected to educate children as well in 7 or 8 months each year as states with higher salaries and better facilities can do in 9 months or longer.

Enrolment in high schools—Educators and lay leaders are generally agreed that every mentally and physically able child should have a suitable high-school education. Altho not all high-school pupils are obtaining a suitable education, most of them are undoubtedly approaching that ideal more closely than children of high-school age who do not attend school. Moreover, a large proportion of the latter group are out of school either because no high school is readily accessible or because the local high school offers little or nothing to meet their particular needs. Hence, the number of enrollees in Grades IX to XII for each 1000 persons aged fourteen to seventeen may be used as a rough comparative measure of the extent to which the states are providing appropriate high-school opportunities.

Figure V shows that in 1939-40 the number of children enrolled in high schools for each 1000 who were fourteen to seventeen years old ranged from 392 in Mississippi to 952 in Washington. Seven states had fewer than 500 pupils in high schools for each 1000 of high-school age, while twelve states had more than 800 enrolled for each 1000 in this age group. The nine lowest states are in the Southeast; ten of the twelve highest are in the Northwest or the Far West.

Reasons for inequalities—Contrary to the opinion of many people, the inequalities of educational opportunity discussed above are not due primarily to differences in interest and effort among the states. The chief factors in the situation are differences in economic ability on the one hand and in the relative numbers of children to be educated on the other hand. Data on these factors are presented in the next two sections of the bulletin.

FIGURE III

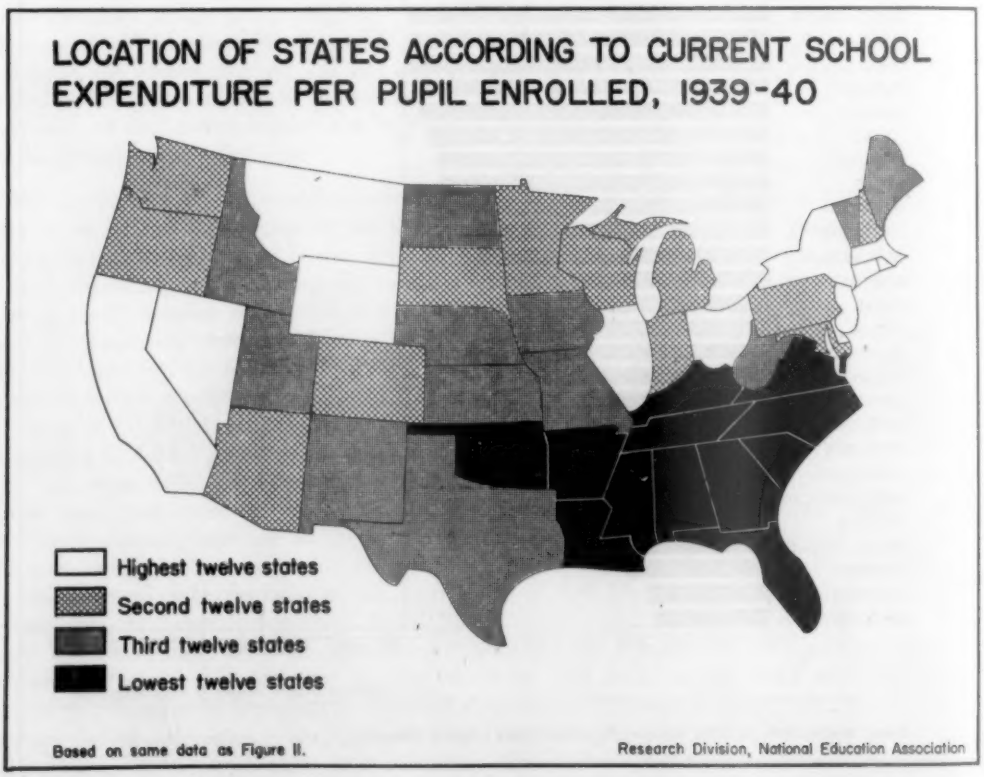
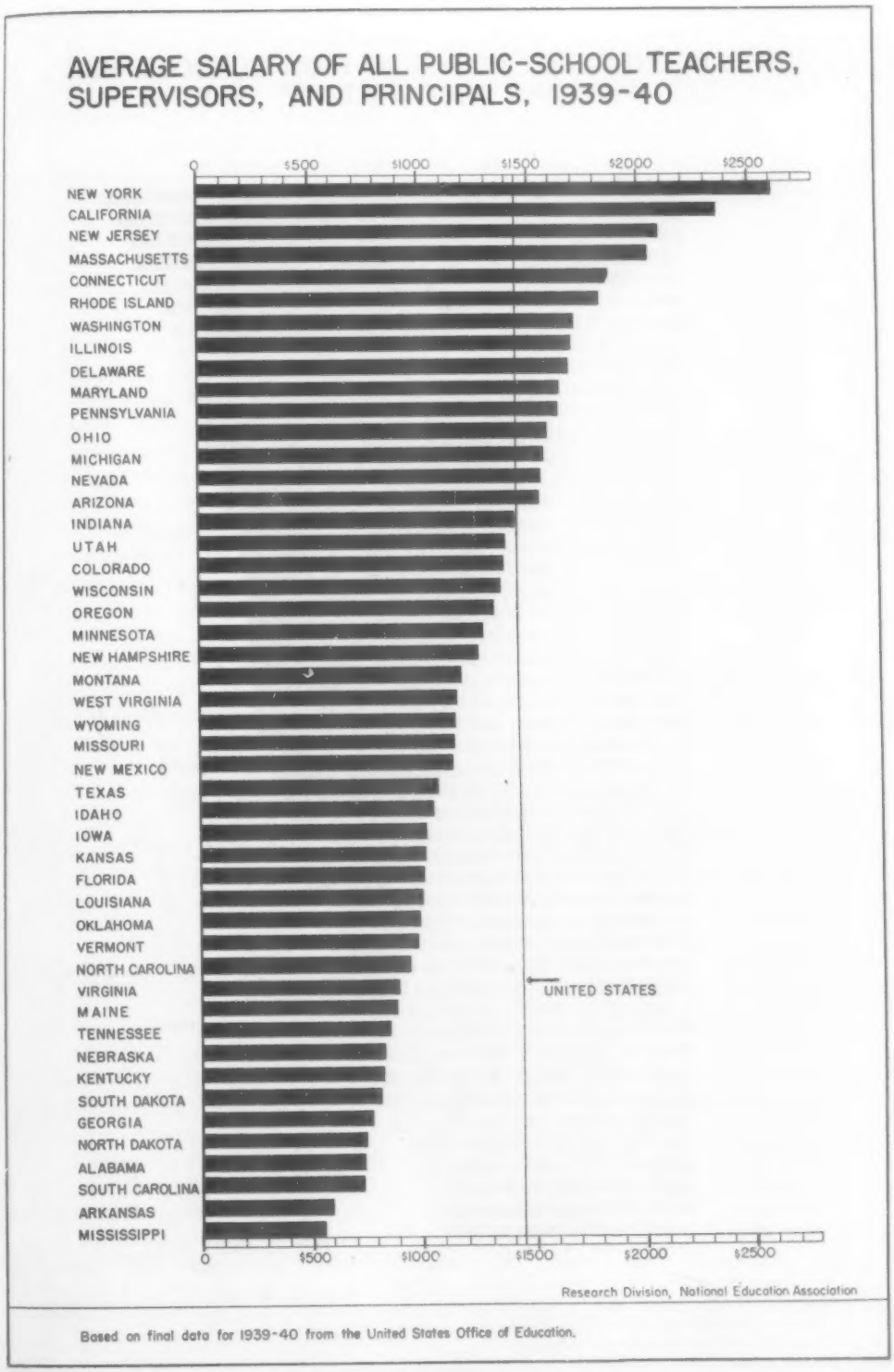
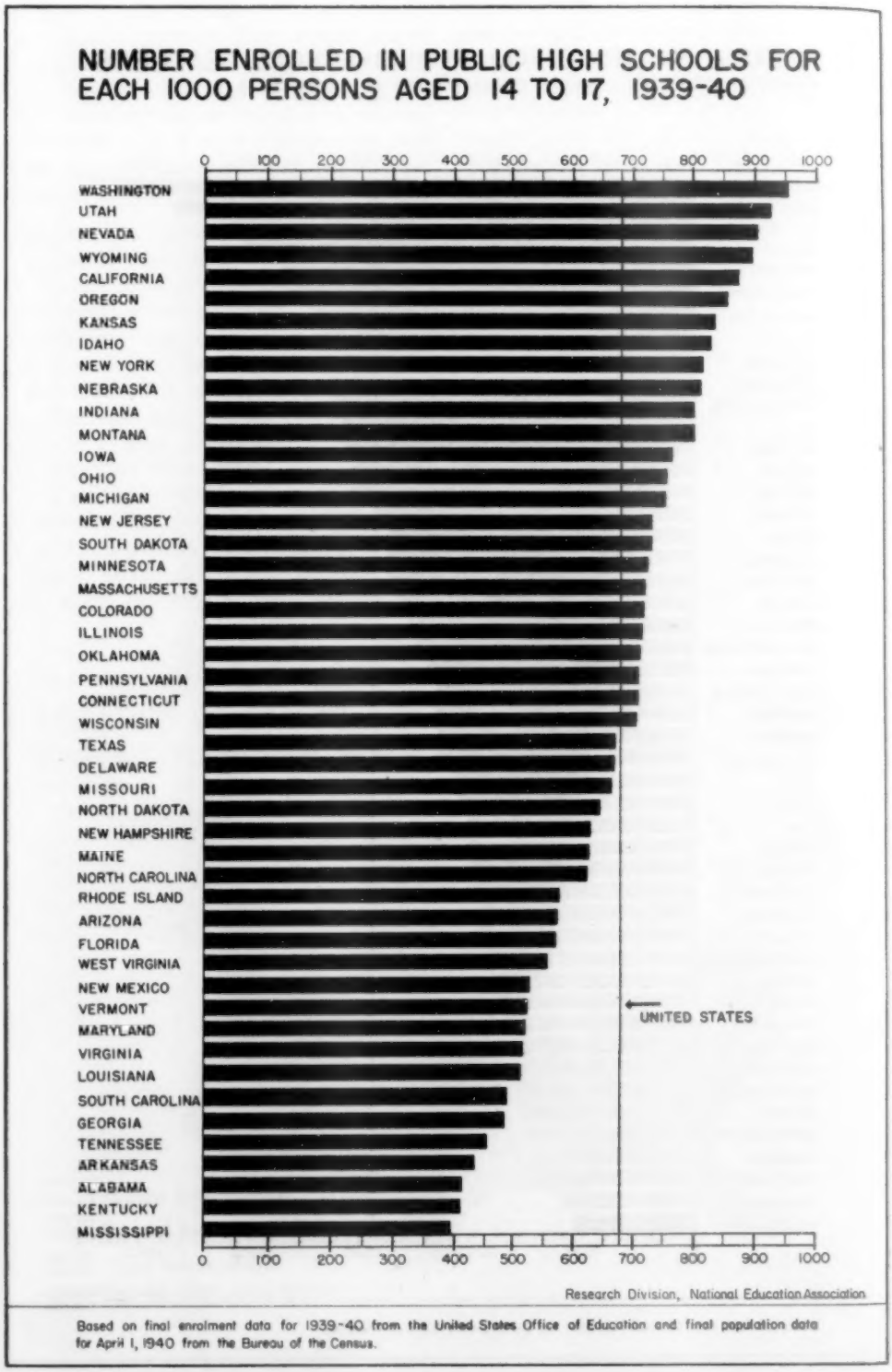

LOCATION OF STATES ACCORDING TO CURRENT SCHOOL EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL ENROLLED, 1939-40
Highest twelve states
Second twelve states
Third twelve states
Lowest twelve states
Based on same data as Figure II.
Research Division, National Education Association

FIGURE IV



Based on final data for 1939-40 from the United States Office of Education.

FIGURE V



Based on final enrolment data for 1939-40 from the United States Office of Education and final population data for April 1, 1940 from the Bureau of the Census.

IV. Relative Educational Responsibilities of the States

One of the main reasons why some states provide less adequate school opportunities than do others is that they have disproportionately large numbers of children of school age. The following paragraphs offer evidence on this point and indicate the chief reasons for present and probable future differences in the relative educational responsibilities of the states.

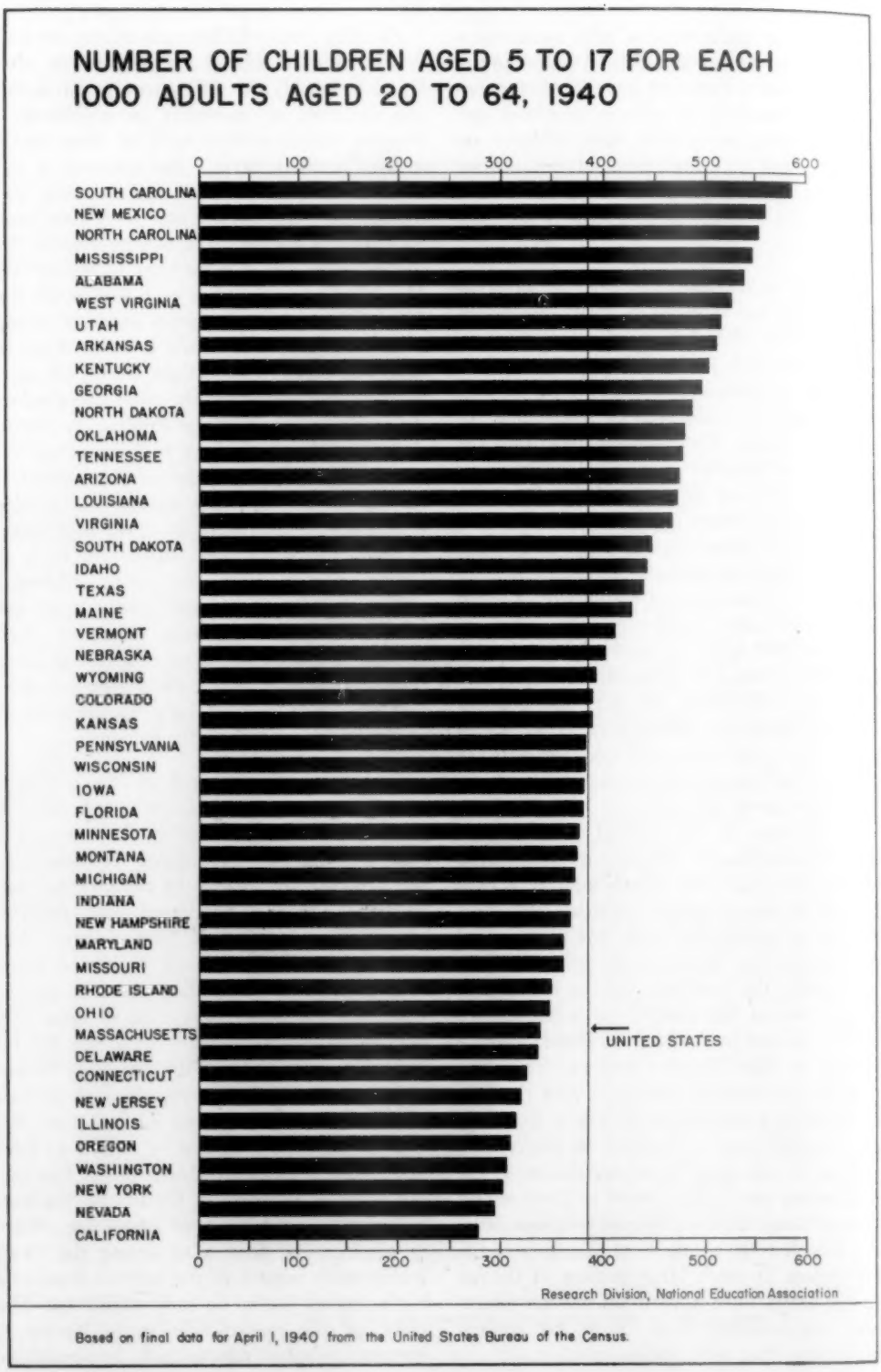
Ratio of school-age children to adults—Heading the list of states in 1940 was South Carolina with 589 children five to seventeen years old for each 1000 adults aged twenty to sixty-four. California, at the foot of the list, had only 277 children of school age for each 1000 adults. These figures mean that the productive population of South Carolina was responsible for an educational burden relatively twice as heavy as California's burden. Data on this point for all the forty-eight states are shown graphically in Figure VI. In nine states the number of school-age children for each 1000 adults aged twenty to sixty-four was above 500 while in twelve states it was below 350. These variations would have made substantial differences in the amounts of money available per child even if all states had had the same amount of tax resources per adult and had devoted the same proportion of those resources to education.

On the map in Figure VII each state is identified according to whether it stood in the first, second, third, or fourth quarter of the states with respect to the ratio of school-age children to adults in 1940. Of the sixteen states having the highest such ratios, thirteen are in either the Southeast or the Southwest. All but two of the twelve states having the lowest ratios are in the New England, Middle Atlantic, or Far Western regions. This geographical distribution reflects in part the fact that farming areas and small towns generally have a higher ratio of children to adults than do cities. In the rural farm population of the Southeastern states there were in 1940 nearly twice as many children five to nineteen years old for each 1000 adults as in the cities of the same region. In other large sections of the nation the adult farm population had an educational responsibility from 30 to 60 percent heavier than that of the cities.

Fertility ratio—Differences among the states in the ratio of school-age children to adults are due largely to differences in birth-rates and in rates of mortality in childhood. A measure which reflects both of these factors is the "fertility ratio"—the number of children under five years of age for each 1000 women between twenty and forty-four years. As shown in Figure VIII, this number in 1940 ranged from 289 in New York to 666 in New Mexico. Fourteen states each had more than 500 children under five years per 1000 women twenty to forty-four, while in seven states the ratio was below 350. On the whole, the states having the highest fertility ratios had the largest numbers of school-age children in relation to their adult populations, and vice versa. This means that the rank order of the states with respect to their relative educational burdens is not likely to change much in the near future, at least. Unfortunately, the states with the largest proportions of very young children as well as of school-age youngsters have, generally speaking, the lowest taxpaying ability and the lowest standards of educational opportunity. They are among the states, moreover, that are likely to send large numbers of migrants to other parts of the nation.

Rates of birth and early childhood mortality—Another way of judging whether the present relative positions of the states with respect to their educational responsibilities are likely to continue is to compute for each state the number of registered births per 1000 of total population and then subtract from this figure the number of registered deaths among children under five years of age per 1000 of total population. For the year 1940 this measure ranged from 13.5 per 1000 in New Jersey to 24.4 per 1000 in New Mexico. Of the twelve states having the highest ratios of school-age children to adults, nine were among the twelve highest in regard to births minus deaths among children under five years per 1000 of population. Of the twelve states having the lowest ratios of school-age children to adults, nine were also among the twelve lowest with respect to the relative number of births minus deaths in early childhood. Similarly, of the twenty-four states having the greatest relative educational responsibilities,

FIGURE VI



Based on final data for April 1, 1940 from the United States Bureau of the Census.

twenty were also among the upper twenty-four in the excess of births over deaths in early childhood for each 1000 of total population.

In appraising the probable future effects of birth-rates and of mortality in early childhood, it is helpful to consider the net changes which occurred in these rates between 1930 and 1940. The number of births minus deaths among children under five years per 1000 of total population decreased in twenty-six states, remained the same in two states, and increased in twenty states. The greatest decrease was that of 2.2 in Nebraska (from 18.3 to 16.1), while the largest increase was that of 4.2 in Nevada (from 13.3 to 17.5). The nation as a whole experienced a decrease of 0.4.

Of the twenty-four states having the most children aged five to seventeen for each 1000 adults aged twenty to sixty-four in 1940, fourteen were also among the highest twenty-four with respect to the increase from 1930 to 1940 in relative number of births minus deaths in early childhood. The twelve states having the heaviest responsibilities showed an average gain of less than 0.1 and the twelve having the lightest responsibilities showed an average loss of about the same amount. Of the first twelve, South Carolina, New Mexico, Mississippi, Kentucky, Georgia, and Oklahoma made gains in the relative number of births minus deaths in early childhood while North Carolina, Alabama, West Virginia, Utah, Arkansas, and North Dakota experienced losses. Of the twelve states having the smallest proportions of children five to seventeen years old, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and California made substantial gains in the relative number of births minus deaths in early childhood while Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Ohio, and Illinois experienced losses.

The foregoing facts indicate that, as far as rates of birth and of early childhood mortality are concerned, the states which now have disproportionately large numbers of children of school age are not likely to be relieved of this handicap for many years to come. Most of these states must look forward to the continuance of relatively heavy educational loads, at least for the decades immediately ahead.

FIGURE VII

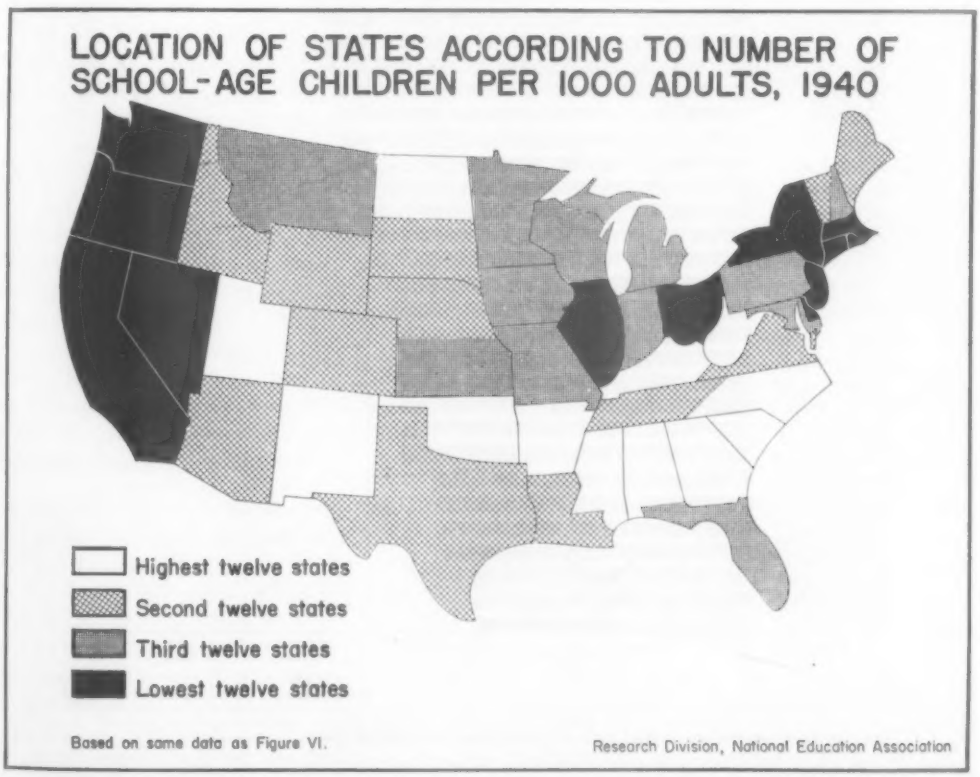

LOCATION OF STATES ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN PER 1000 ADULTS, 1940
Highest twelve states
Second twelve states
Third twelve states
Lowest twelve states
Based on same data as Figure VI.
Research Division, National Education Association

FIGURE VIII

NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS FOR EACH 1000 WOMEN AGED 20 TO 44, 1940

Research Division, National Education Association

Based on final data for April 1, 1940 from the United States Bureau of the Census.

V. Relative Economic Ability of the States To Support Education

Existing inequalities of educational opportunity among the states are due, not only to marked differences in the relative size of their school-age populations (as shown in the preceding section), but also to large differences in the financial abilities of the states. The extent of these differences in financial ability, as well as some of the factors responsible for them, is sketched in the paragraphs which follow.

Income per adult—Figure IX shows for each state the total estimated income payments per adult between the ages of twenty and sixty-four. The figure used is not the actual average income of adults in this age group who received incomes, but is the result of dividing the total income payments for *all* persons in the state by the number of persons aged twenty to sixty-four in the state. This provides a rough measure of the relative economic ability of the productive adult populations of the several states, without regard to the nature and size of the task to which such economic ability might need to be applied. This measure is especially significant when compared, state by state, with the number of children of school age for each 1000 adults aged twenty to sixty-four as shown in Figure VI on page 16.

In 1940 the total estimated income payments per person aged twenty to sixty-four ranged from $379 in Mississippi to $1509 in Nevada, while for the nation as a whole it was $976. Thus, the richest state had nearly four times as much income per adult (with only about half as many school-age children per adult) as did the poorest state. Nine of the twelve poorest states were also among the twelve highest in the number of school-age children per adult, and nine of the twelve richest states were also among the twelve lowest in the number of school-age children per adult.

Estimated school revenue per child—An even more significant measure of the relative financial ability of the states to maintain schools is the estimated school revenue per child aged five to seventeen if each state were to make average effort under a uniform tax program. Figure X presents this measure for the forty-eight states as of 1935-36. The figures are based on the estimated combined yield of six types of taxes at uniform rates as computed by Newcomer.[1] The six types are the personal income tax, real estate tax, business income tax, stock transfer tax, severance tax, and corporation organization tax. These are the taxes considered available to the states for the support of social functions of government, including education; they do not include taxes available for special benefits, such as gasoline taxes for highways. The latest year for which the proceeds of such a tax program have been estimated for all the states is 1935.

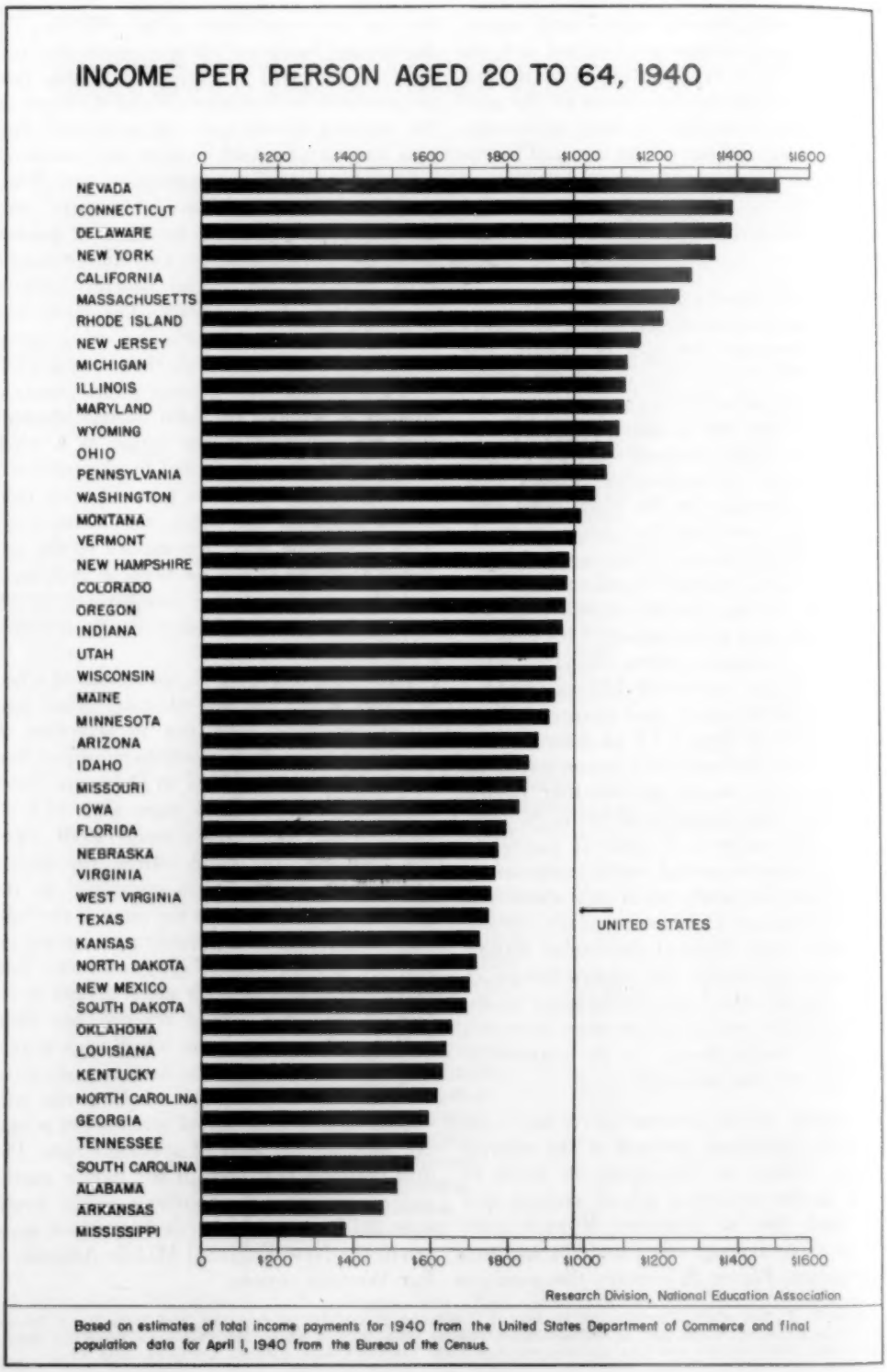
To determine the "average effort" made in support of schools, the total current expenditure for education in the nation as a whole during 1935-36 was divided by the total estimated proceeds of the six types of taxes mentioned above in the entire nation for 1935. This proportion was then applied to the estimated proceeds of the six taxes in each state, and the resulting figure was divided by the estimated number of children five to seventeen years old in the state.

According to Figure X, the estimated school revenues which the several states could have raised per child aged five to seventeen by making average effort would have ranged from $12 in Mississippi to $157 in Delaware. Seven states could have raised more than $75 per child, while nine states could have raised less than $25 per child. Altho the highest and lowest twelve states according to this measure were very nearly the same as the highest and lowest twelve according to income per person aged twenty to sixty-four, the total range was proportionately much greater in the case of estimated school revenue per child.

Figure XI is a map on which each state is identified as falling in the first, second, third, or fourth quarter of the whole group with respect to estimated school revenue per school-age child on the basis of average effort. This map indicates that each of the twelve poorest states is in either the Southeast or the Southwest, while nine of the twelve richest states are in the New England, Middle Atlantic, or Far Western regions.

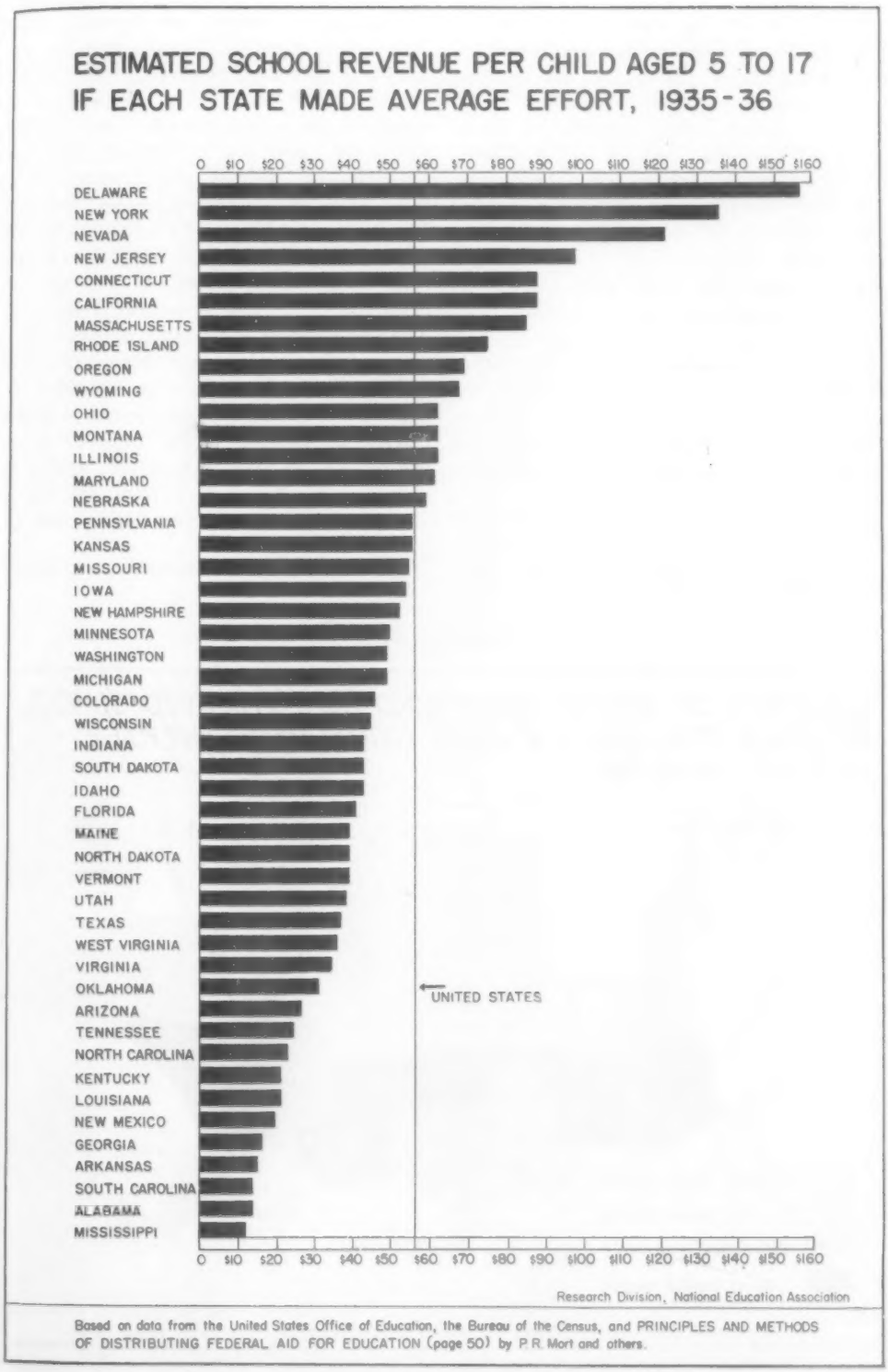
[1] Mort, P. R., and others. *Principles and Methods of Distributing Federal Aid for Education*. Staff Study No. 5, Advisory Committee on Education. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1939. p. 50. See also: Newcomer, Mabel. *An Index of the Taxpaying Ability of State and Local Governments*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935. 85 p.

FIGURE IX



Based on estimates of total income payments for 1940 from the United States Department of Commerce and final population data for April 1, 1940 from the Bureau of the Census.

FIGURE X



Based on data from the United States Office of Education, the Bureau of the Census, and PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF DISTRIBUTING FEDERAL AID FOR EDUCATION (page 50) by P.R. Mort and others.

Factors underlying differences in economic ability—A number of factors have contributed to the widely differing abilities of the states to support schools. There are great differences among the states in the nature and amount of their natural resources. The interplay of economic, social, and political forces has made agriculture generally, and in the Southern states especially, less profitable for the typical family than industrial pursuits. The enormous growth in corporate ownership of wealth has made it difficult for individual states to tax fairly the wealth and income produced within their own boundaries when much of that wealth and income is controlled and exploited by persons or organizations in other states. The shifting of population from farms to cities has taken material wealth as well as human resources from sections in which agriculture is the chief occupation to areas engaged primarily in business and industry.

Still another factor of special significance in recent years has been the program of federal taxation.[2] Figure XII shows that increases in the amounts of federal tax revenue actually drawn (not merely collected) from the various states have been relatively greater in most of the poorer states than in most of the wealthier ones. For example, from 1928 to 1937—the latest year for which figures are available—the federal tax revenues drawn from Mississippi, South Carolina, and New Mexico increased by 93, 117, and 116 percent, respectively, while the amounts drawn from New York, Massachusetts, and Ohio increased by only 27, 35, and 37 percent, respectively. Altho the poorer states paid relatively small amounts of federal revenue thruout the period 1928-1937, the increased amounts which they paid in 1937 generally represented a greater percent of increase in the ratio of federal tax revenue to relative taxpaying ability (as measured by Newcomer) than did the increased amounts paid by the wealthier states.

[2] Chisholm, Leslie L. *The Shifting of Federal Taxes and Its Implications for the Public Schools.* Madison, Wis.: Journal of Experimental Education, 1939. 84 p.

FIGURE XI

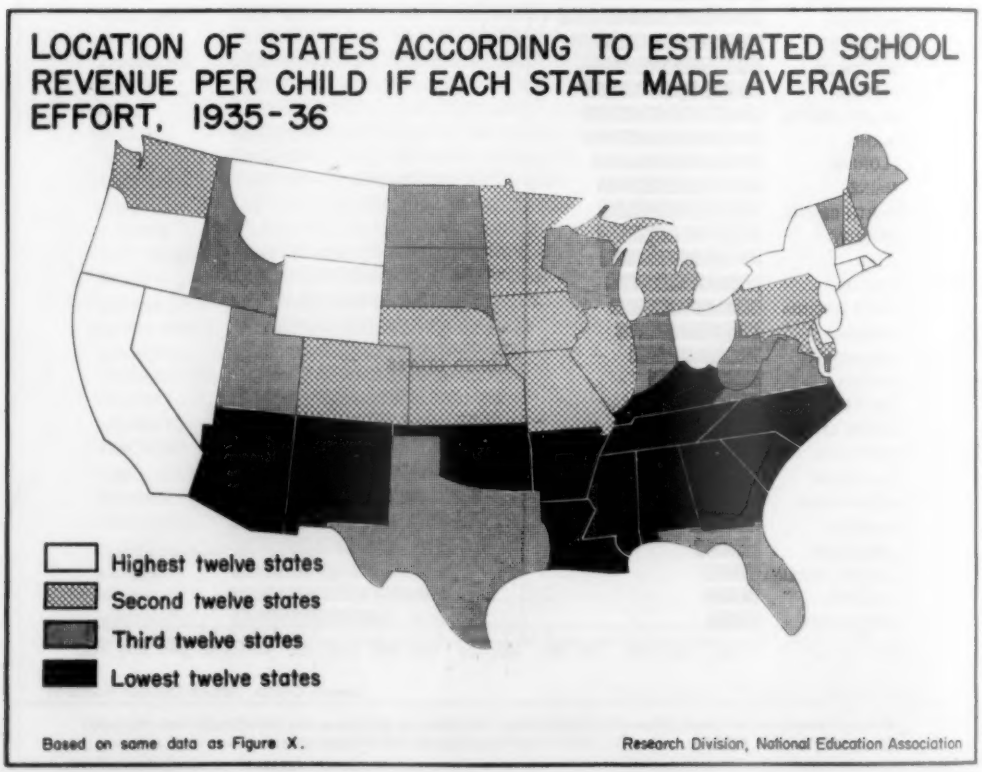
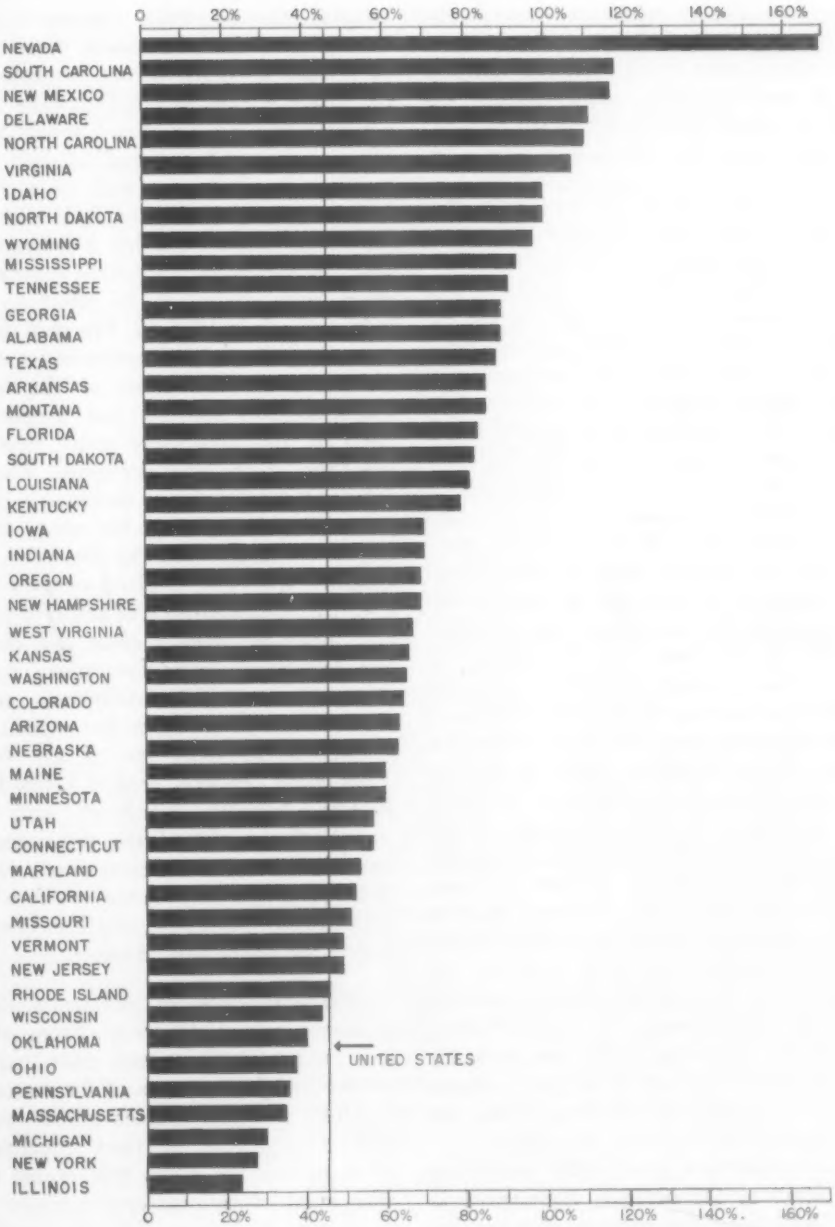

LOCATION OF STATES ACCORDING TO ESTIMATED SCHOOL REVENUE PER CHILD IF EACH STATE MADE AVERAGE EFFORT, 1935-36
Highest twelve states
Second twelve states
Third twelve states
Lowest twelve states
Based on same data as Figure X.
Research Division, National Education Association

FIGURE XII

PERCENT OF INCREASE IN FEDERAL TAX REVENUE DRAWN FROM EACH STATE, 1928 - 1937



Research Division, National Education Association

Based on data in THE SHIFTING OF FEDERAL TAXES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (page 60) by Leslie L. Chisholm.

VI. Financial Efforts of the States To Support Schools

One frequently hears the statement that inequalities of educational opportunity among the states are due chiefly to differences in willingness and in financial effort to support schools. Such a statement is immediately recognized as false by anyone who knows the facts. The preceding section of this bulletin has shown that, even under a modern, uniform system of taxation, states making exactly the same efforts would differ widely in the amounts of revenue which they could raise per child.

Actual efforts—Figure XIII reveals that the states actually exhibit great differences in effort. Examination of this chart in connection with Figures II and X, however, will show that states making relatively great effort tend, in general, to have less financial ability and to spend less money per pupil than do those making relatively little effort. The measure of effort used here is the percent which state and local current expenditures for education are of the state's relative taxpaying ability. Relative taxpaying ability (as computed by Newcomer) is the estimated combined yield, at uniform rates, of six types of taxes considered as available to support the social functions of state and local government.[1]

In 1935-36—the latest year for which estimates of relative taxpaying ability are available—the state making the greatest effort spent for education more than four times as large a proportion of its taxpaying ability as did the state making the least effort. Each of the three highest states spent for schools at least twice as large a proportion of its estimated tax resources as did any of the six lowest states. Yet each of the three states ranking highest in effort was among the twelve lowest with respect to taxpaying ability per child aged five to seventeen, while three of the six states ranking lowest in effort were among the twelve highest with respect to taxpaying ability per child. Of the twelve states making the greatest efforts, not one was among the twelve making the largest current expenditures per pupil.

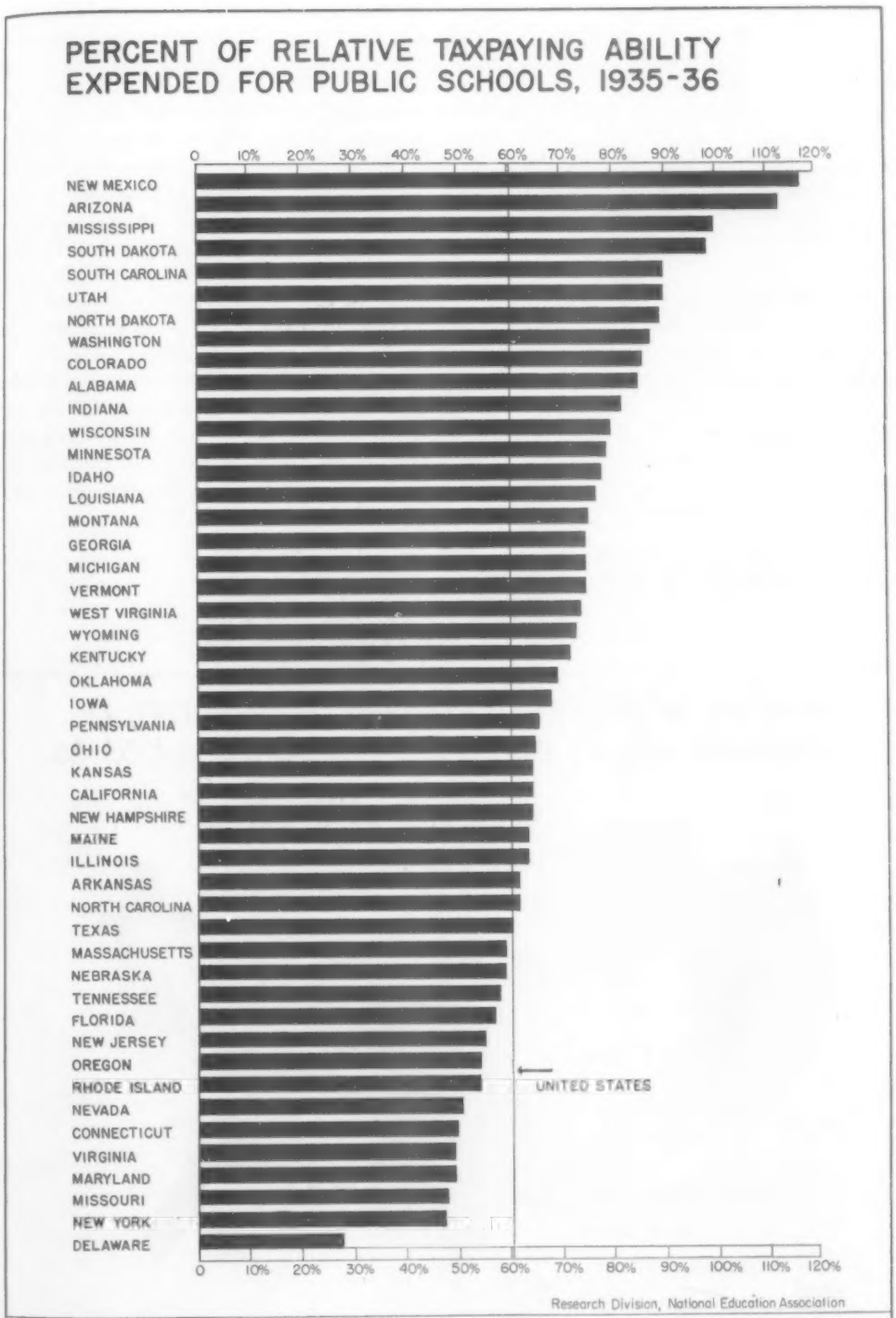
A word of caution is advisable concerning interpretation of the percents represented in Figure XIII. Since the measure of taxpaying ability used here is only *relative*, the percent of that ability devoted to schools in any state is likewise only relative. For example, the 100 percent shown for Mississippi does not mean that Mississippi spent for schools every dollar that it could possibly have raised thru taxation for all social services. Rather, it means that Mississippi spent three and one-half times as much of its taxpaying ability for public schools as did Delaware (with 28 percent), twice as much as Connecticut (with 50 percent), and one and one-half times as much as Pennsylvania (with 67 percent).

On the map in Figure XIV each state is shaded to indicate whether it belonged in the first, second, third, or fourth quarter of the states with respect to its effort to support public schools in 1935-36. The map shows that altho no section of the nation had a monopoly on either the high-effort or the low-effort states, certain sections had proportionately more of the high-effort states than of the low-effort states, and vice versa. The Northwest and the Southwest each had a clear preponderance of states in the upper half with respect to effort, while the Far West, Middle Atlantic, and New England sections each had a similar preponderance of states in the lower half. Both the Middle states and the Southeast had more high-effort states than low-effort states but the differences were less marked than in the other five regions. It may be significant, too, that of the thirty-one states in the "eastern" regions (New England, Middle Atlantic, Southeast, and Middle states) almost three-fifths were among the *lower* half in effort, whereas nearly two-thirds of the seventeen states in the "western" regions (Northwest, Southwest, and Far West) were among the *upper* half in effort.

Efforts required to support a defensible minimum school program—From the facts thus far presented it seems clear that altho a few of the poorer states might reasonably be expected to make greater efforts than they made in 1935-36, no mere equalization of effort among the states will enable them to offer equal educational opportunities. In fact, as shown in Figure XV, the provision of school programs costing the same amount of

[1] Mort, P. R., and others. *Principles and Methods of Distributing Federal Aid for Education*. Staff Study No. 5, Advisory Committee on Education. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1939. p. 50.

FIGURE XIII



Based on school expenditure data from the United States Office of Education and on Newcomer's estimates of relative taxpaying ability as reported in PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF DISTRIBUTING FEDERAL AID FOR EDUCATION (page 50) by P. R. Mort and others.

money per child in each state would require a much wider range of effort than now exists.

Figure XV shows what percent of its relative taxpaying ability each state would have had to use in order to provide a school program costing $48 for each weighted [2] census child aged five to seventeen in 1935. This amount, which was equivalent to about $60 per weighted pupil in average daily attendance, has been suggested by competent students of the problem as the approximate cost of a defensible *minimum* program of education for all the states.[3] To provide such a program, the poorest state (Mississippi) would have had to make more than twelve times as much effort as the richest state (Delaware). The second poorest state (Alabama) would have had to make more than nine times the effort required of the second richest state (New York). Since the twelve states of which the greatest efforts would have been required were also the twelve lowest in taxpaying ability, it is not surprising to find them all in the Southeast or the Southwest. On the other hand, ten of the twelve states which would have had to make the least efforts to support the suggested minimum program are in the New England, Middle Atlantic, or Far Western regions.

As in the case of the figures representing actual efforts (Figure XIII), these percents representing hypothetical efforts are significant only in relation to one another. It should not be assumed, for example, that in Mississippi the cost of the minimum program would have been 3.14 times as much as that state could have collected under a modern tax system for all social purposes. Nevertheless, it is clear that in 1935 a number of the states could not have provided suitable school opportunities for every child without financial help, and there can be little doubt that the situation is substantially the same today.

[2] Weighted to allow for the higher costs of providing a given standard of education in rural areas due to sparsity of population and in the larger urban areas due to higher costs of living.

[3] Mort, P. R., and others, *op. cit.*, Chapters 5 and 6.

FIGURE XIV

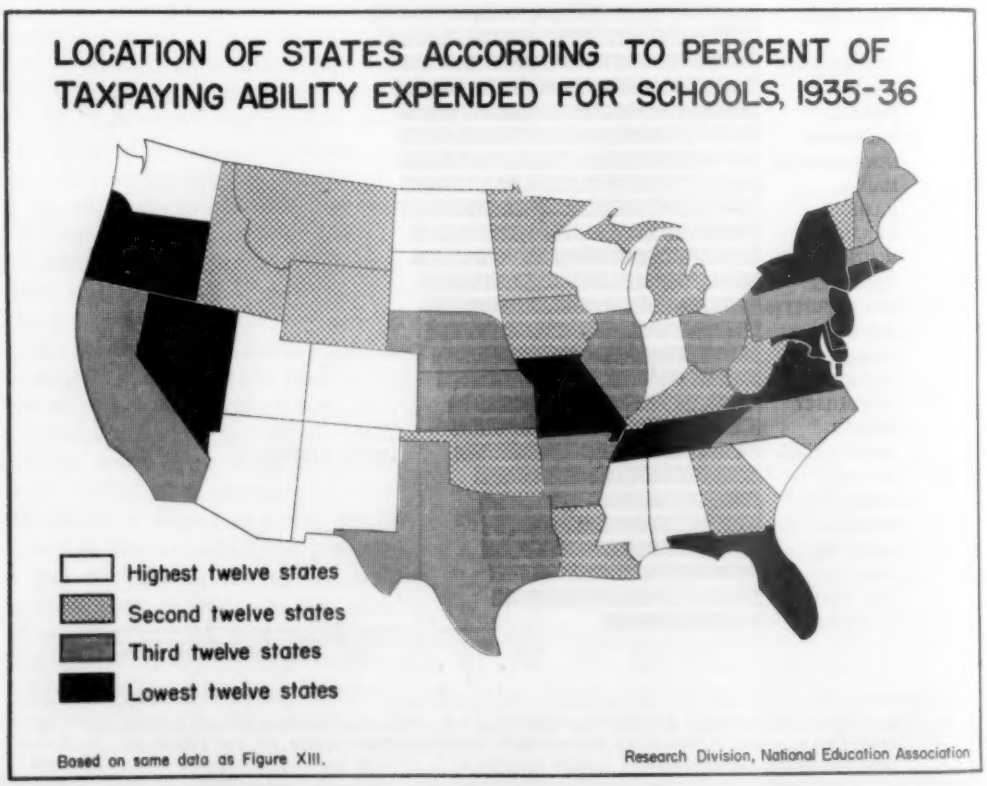
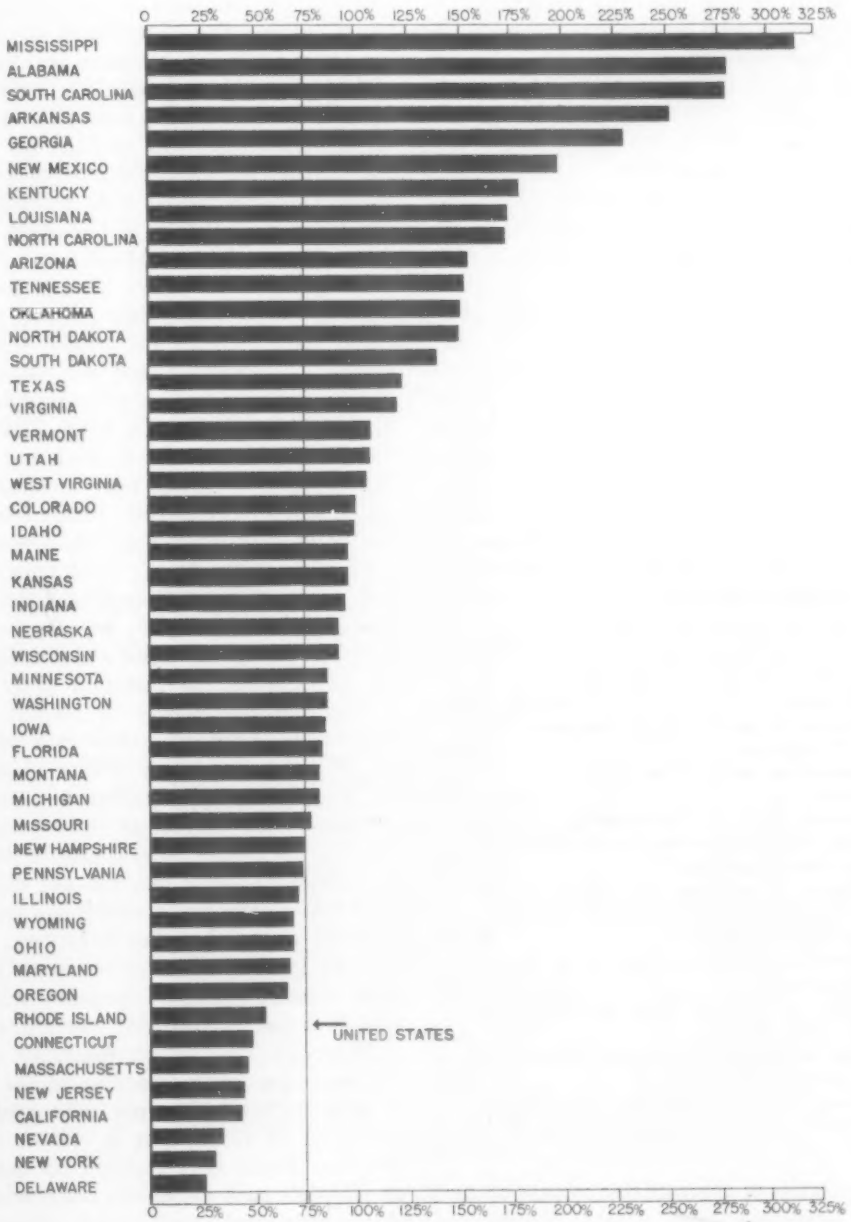

LOCATION OF STATES ACCORDING TO PERCENT OF TAXPAYING ABILITY EXPENDED FOR SCHOOLS, 1935-36
Highest twelve states
Second twelve states
Third twelve states
Lowest twelve states
Based on same data as Figure XIII.
Research Division, National Education Association

FIGURE XV

PERCENT OF RELATIVE TAXPAYING ABILITY REQUIRED TO SUPPORT A SCHOOL PROGRAM COSTING $48 ANNUALLY PER WEIGHTED CENSUS CHILD AGED 5 TO 17, 1935



Research Division, National Education Association

Based on data in PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF DISTRIBUTING FEDERAL AID FOR EDUCATION (pages 50 and 68) by P. R. Mort and others.

VII. Probable Allocation of Funds under the Pending Bill

As stated earlier, the proposed federal aid legislation—S. 1313 (Amended)—would appropriate a total of $300,000,000 per year for public elementary and secondary schools without earmarking any part of this fund for specific aspects of education. All but $5,000,000 of the fund would be distributed among the states and territories (including Alaska, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia) according to a simple formula specified in the bill. The remaining $5,000,000 would be allocated to the outlying possessions of Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and Guam according to their needs as appraised by the United States Commissioner of Education. The method of distributing the $295,000,000 would be based on two factors: (1) the total number of children aged five to seventeen in each state as estimated by the Bureau of the Census, and (2) the total amount of personal net income in each state as determined by the Bureau of Internal Revenue from the most recent personal income tax returns made under the internal revenue laws of the United States. The application of this method is shown here for Mississippi, using personal net income for 1939 and population estimates for July 1, 1940:

1. Total number of persons five to seventeen years old in the United States 29,940,883
2. Amount of personal net income in the United States $23,191,876,000
3. Number of persons five to seventeen years old in Mississippi 611,748
4. Amount of personal net income in Mississippi $73,095,000
5. Percent of persons five to seventeen years old in the United States who live in Mississippi (percent item 3 is of item 1) 2.04%
6. Percent of personal net income in the United States which is received in Mississippi (percent item 4 is of item 2) 0.32%
7. Sixty-five percent[1] of item 6 (65 percent of 0.32 percent) 0.21%
8. Index of financial need for Mississippi (item 5 minus item 7) 1.83
9. Sum of indexes of financial need for all states (computed as in item 8) 41.73
10. Percent of federal aid fund which Mississippi would receive (percent item 8 is of item 9) 4.39%

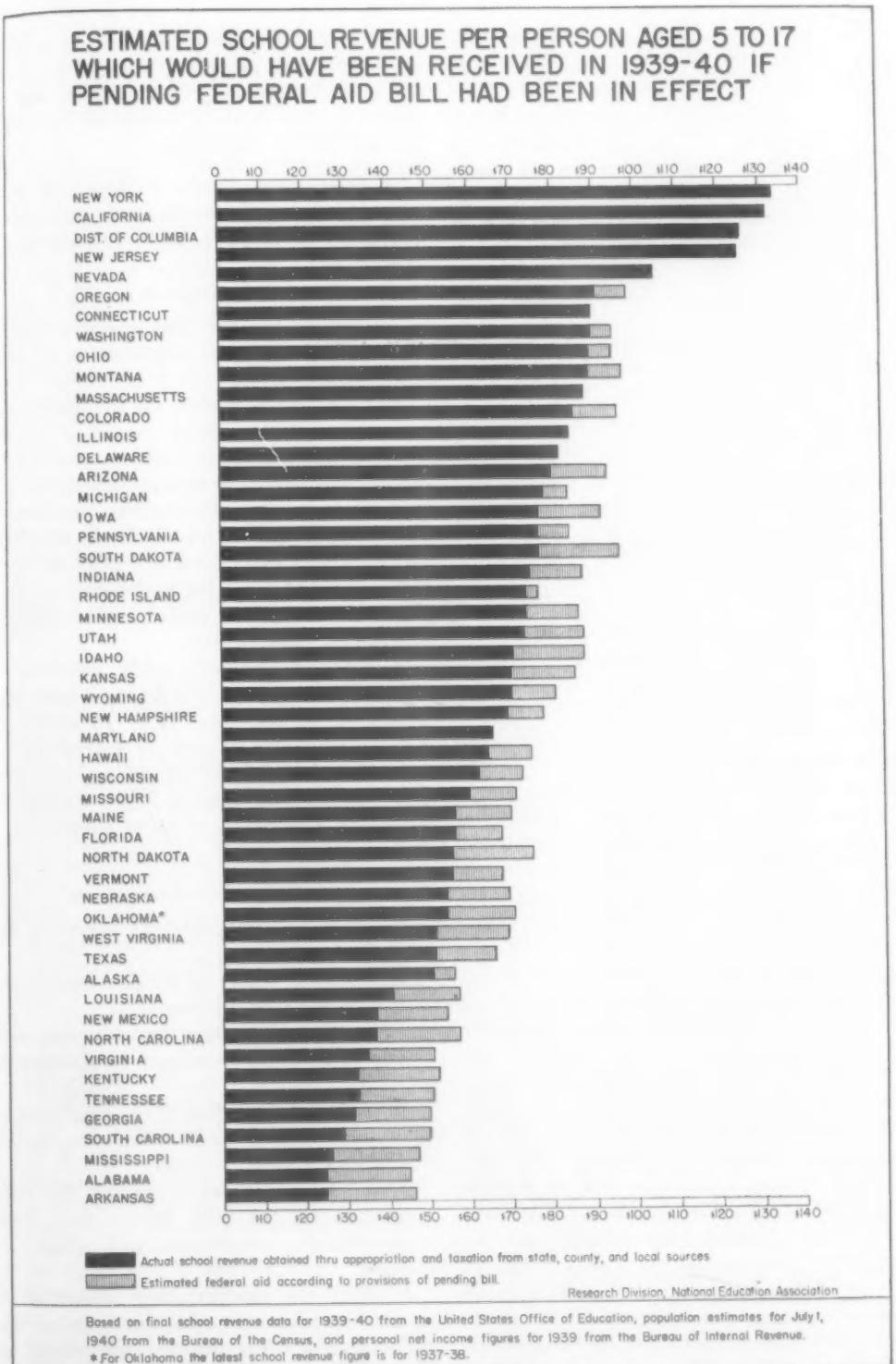
The results of applying this method to each of the forty-eight states, Alaska, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia are presented in Figure XVI. This chart shows for each state (1) the amount of school revenue per child aged five to seventeen which was actually obtained thru appropriation and taxation from state, county, and local sources in 1939-40, and (2) the estimated amount of federal aid per child aged five to seventeen which would have been received in the same year under provisions of the pending bill. While the revenue actually received ranged from $25 per child in Arkansas and Alabama to $134 per child in New York, the estimated amount of federal aid would have ranged from nothing in nine states and the District of Columbia to more than $21 per child in Mississippi.

In general, the states having the lowest amounts of local and state revenue per child would have received the largest amounts of federal aid per child, and vice versa. There were, however, a number of striking exceptions to this rule. For example, South Dakota with $77 per child from appropriation and taxation within the state would have received federal aid of $19 per child, while Rhode Island with $74 of its own revenue per child would have received less than $3 per child from the federal treasury. Such discrepancies are due to the fact that the figures on school revenues obtained thru appropriation and taxation within the states reflect the factor of *effort* as well as the factor of *ability* to support schools, whereas the proposed distribution of federal aid is based entirely on ability as measured by the amount of personal net income in relation to the number of children aged five to seventeen in each state. Rhode Island would have received much less aid per child than would South Dakota because it had far greater financial ability than South Dakota. Rhode Island's failure to raise more money per child thru appropriation and taxation within the state was due to relatively low effort.

When the states and territories are arranged in descending order according to the amount of personal net income per child aged five to seventeen in 1939-40, it is evident that the first ten would have received no federal aid at all while each succeeding state, with a few minor exceptions, would have received more aid per child than would its predecessors.

[1] Sixty-five percent of each state's proportion of all the personal net income in the nation is used because, in the judgment of the NEA Legislative Commission, this figure would give the fairest treatment to the largest number of states. The use of 100 percent would cause too great a concentration of federal aid in the lowest income states.

FIGURE XVI



Based on final school revenue data for 1939-40 from the United States Office of Education, population estimates for July 1, 1940 from the Bureau of the Census, and personal net income figures for 1939 from the Bureau of Internal Revenue.
*For Oklahoma the latest school revenue figure is for 1937-38.

VIII. Next Steps toward Enactment of the Pending Bill

The National Education Association maintains that federal aid for general elementary and secondary education under public control is essential to the welfare of this nation whether in war or in peace. The Association has recently devoted, and will continue to devote, a substantial share of its resources to active support of the pending bill, S. 1313 (Amended). In addition, interested groups and individuals in the various states are expected to help carry on vigorous campaigns in behalf of the measure.

State and local organization—If state and local campaigns are to be effective, three conditions must be fulfilled: (1) suitable organization, preferably with a chart showing the relationships among individuals and committees, (2) a definite statement of the functions to be performed by individuals and committees, and (3) the assignment of personnel to positions of responsibility. No one form of organization can be set up for all states; the type selected for any state should depend upon existing conditions, including machinery already available for influencing public opinion. In general, however, it is recommended that in each state there be a central state committee, a committee for each Congressional district, a committee for each county, and as many local committees as are needed.

If there is a well-knit state organization for the support of federal aid, local communities will of course have an important place in that organization. Individual communities are urged, however, to carry on campaigns of their own if there is no effective state or district organization in their state. It is recommended that each community, whether or not it is a part of a state organization, set up at least the following committees: (1) an executive committee to adapt procedures to local conditions, keep people at work on the program, and maintain contact with NEA headquarters; (2) an information committee to assemble data supplied by various agencies as well as compile facts about the probable effect of federal aid on local educational opportunity; and (3) a public relations committee, perhaps organized into several subcommittees, to provide news releases, arrange for radio broadcasts, distribute available literature on federal aid, make effective use of posters, billboards, and streetcar or bus placards, arrange for speakers at meetings on federal aid, promote programs on federal aid among community organizations, and organize the friends of education for a complete canvass of the community.

Activities for teachers—Here are some ways in which individual teachers and teachers organizations can help to win the battle for federal aid:

Individuals

1. Become familiar with the data in this bulletin and with the provisions of S. 1313 (Amended).
2. Offer your services to the appropriate committee of your local association or the state association. (If necessary, write directly to the secretary of your state association.)
3. Help inform other teachers and laymen in your community by circulating leaflets, leading discussion groups, making talks at luncheon clubs, and preparing explanatory or illustrative materials as needed. (This bulletin supplies the basic facts.)
4. Establish contacts with members of Congress from your district and encourage others to do the same so as to obtain all possible legislative support for federal aid.
5. Keep in touch with your local and state committees so that your activities may be coordinated with those of other supporters of federal aid.

Local Teachers Associations

1. Organize committees to carry on the campaign.
2. Obtain a supply of NEA materials and distribute them to all members.
3. Establish contacts with your state association in order to coordinate local and state activities.
4. Publish information in the local teachers journal or issue a special newsletter on federal aid.
5. Organize a speakers bureau for radio programs and for talks before civic clubs, parent-teacher associations, and other lay groups.
6. Help the parent-teacher association to develop programs, organize discussion groups, and otherwise bring the case for federal aid to the attention of citizens.

7. Carry the message of federal aid into every home thru small leaflets, mimeographed releases, or even a house-to-house canvass by teachers.

8. Organize public meetings at which talks, panel discussions, motion pictures, or other means are used to stress the need for federal aid and to suggest ways in which laymen can help to secure it.

9. Make arrangements with newspapers so that news releases, special articles, and charts can be published regularly.

10. Utilize American Education Week (November 8-14, 1942) as an opportunity to stress the importance of federal aid.

11. Confer with local public officials in an effort to enlist their active support for federal aid.

12. Ask members of Congress from your district to prepare letters stating their points of view for publication in local newspapers.

13. Maintain contacts with NEA headquarters, reporting local activities, asking for advice if needed, and offering suggestions for carrying on the campaign more effectively.

State Education Associations

1. Assign a member of the staff to keep a file of federal aid materials and to keep informed on the trend of events.

2. Publish pertinent articles, editorials, and news items in the state journal.

3. Organize a state steering committee (or have the association's executive committee assume this function) to direct the state campaign.

4. Help sectional and local associations to organize, to obtain information, and to carry out their activities in support of federal aid.

5. Help to organize and cooperate with state organizations of laymen which should participate in the federal aid campaign.

6. Encourage the state legislature to pass favorable resolutions on federal aid which may be transmitted to Congress.

7. Establish contacts with members of Congress and see that your representatives are kept informed of public opinion in your state.

8. Maintain contacts with the NEA staff, offering suggestions and reporting progress in your state.

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11. Reeves, Floyd W., chairman. *Report of the Committee.* Advisory Committee on Education. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1938. 243 p.

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EDUCATION can be made a force to equalize the condition of men. It is no less true that it may be a force to create class, race, and sectional distinctions. The evidence indicates clearly that the schools of the United States, which have hitherto been regarded as the bulwark of democracy, may in fact become an instrument for creating those very inequalities they were designed to prevent. If, for a long period of years, each succeeding generation is drawn in disproportionately large numbers from those areas in which economic conditions are poorest, if the population reserves of the Nation continue to be recruited from economically underprivileged groups, and if the inability of the depressed economic areas and groups to provide proper education for their children is not corrected by aid from areas and groups more prosperous, the effect on American civilization and on representative political institutions may be disastrous.—*Report of the Advisory Committee on Education, 1938.*